

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAIGON 03550 01 OF 02 261323Z

42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 110031

O R 261033Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4166

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE

USSAG NKP THAILAND IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DA NANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 3550

EXDIS-MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

NOFORN

WARNING--SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS

INVOLVED/NO FOREIGN DISSEMINATION

E.O. 11652: XGDS. DECLASSIFICATION DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO
DETERMINE

TAGS: MOPS, VS

SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF NVA OFFENSIVE--SUMMARY FOR
PERIOD ENDING NOON MARCH 26.

1. GENERAL

IN MR1, ELEMENTS OF THE 1ST DIVISION AND THE 147TH MARINE
BRIGADE ARE CONTINUING TO MAKE THEIR WAY TOWARD DA NANG FROM HUE.
THEY ARE EXPERIENCING SEVERE PROBLEMS APPROXIMATELY ONE THIRD OF
THE WAY TO DA NANG, AND THE MARINE BRIGADE IS THE ONLY UNIT
REMAINING WITH ANY UNIT INTEGRITY. SEVERE PROBLEMS WITH THE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SAIGON 03550 01 OF 02 261323Z

EVACUATION OF THE 2ND DIVISION FROM CHU LAI HAVE ALSO ARISEN. PUBLIC

ORDER IN DA NANG, BOTH AMONG SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS, IS BEGINNING TO BREAK DOWN. IN MR2, PORTIONS OF THE PLEIKU/KONTUM CONVOY REACHED ROUTE 1, BUT ONLY ABOUT 60,000 HAVE REACHED SAFETY. AN ESTIMATED 100,000 ARE STRANDED ALONG THE PHU YEN/PHU BON BORDER WITH LITTLE PROSPECT OF ESCAPE. UNITS INCLUDING THE 3RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE, UNDER THE COMMAND OF THE 23RD DIVISION ARE GUARDING THE ROUTE 21 APPROACH TO NHA TRANG, AND TWO BATTALIONS OF THE 40TH REGT. ARE GUARDING THE WESTERN APPROACHES. IN MR3, THE NVA/VC HAVE BEEN PUSHED AWAY FROM ROUTE 22. HEAVY SHELLING IS IN PROGRESS AROUND TAY NINH, AND HARASSMENT ALONG ROUTE 1 IN LONG KHANH CONTINUES. THE SITUATION REMAINS UNCHANGED IN MR4. RUMORS OF A GVN/"PRG" DEAL FOR THE SAFETY OF REFUGEES HAVE BEEN PROVEN FALSE BY WIDESPREAD NVA ATTACKS ON THE REFUGEES IN BOTH MRS 1 AND 2.

MR1

THE 1ST DIVISION AND THE 147TH MARINE BRIGADE EVACUATING OVERLAND FROM HUE TO DA NANG HAVE RUN INTO DIFFICULTY ABOUT ONE THIRD OF THE WAY TO DA NANG. A BRIDGE TO BE INSTALLED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAU HAI LAGOON TO FACILITATE THEIR PASSAGE HAS NOT BEEN CONSTRUCTED, REPORTEDLY BECAUSE EXFILTRATING 1ST DIVISION TROOPS COMMANDEERED TWO BOATS CARRYING PART OF THE BRIDGE. THE MARINE BRIGADE IS THE ONLY UNIT TO MAINTAIN UNIT INTEGRITY. EQUIPMENT LOSSES IN NORTHERN MR 1 WERE HEAVY, AND INCLUDE AT LEAST 4 175MM GUNS, AND 39 M-48 TANKS WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. AN ATTEMPT TO EVACUATE THE MARINES BY SEA THE NIGHT OF 25-26 MARCH FAILED DUE TO HEAVY SEAS.

IN SOUTHERN MR 1, ATTEMPTS TO EVACUATE THE 2ND DIVISION FROM CHU LAI RESULTED IN MASS PANIC AS A RUSH TO BOARD THE FIRST FEW BOATS CAUSED COMMANDERS TO LOSE CONTROL OF THEIR UNITS. SEVERAL SOLDIERS DIED IN THE RESULTING PANIC.

PUBLIC ORDER IN DA NANG IS BEGINNING TO BREAK DOWN, LARGE NUMBERS OF SOLDIERS, OVER WHOM THERE IS LITTLE COMMAND, HAVE CIVILIAN S ON THE VERGE OF PANIC, AND SOME POLICE ARE BEGINNING TO EXHIBIT SIGNS OF PANIC AS WELL.

MR2

LEAD ELEMENTS OF PLEIKU/KONTUM CONVOY HAVE REACHED ROUTE 1 ON ROUGHLY 1,500 VEHICLES AND ARE NOW MOVING SOUTH TOWARD NHA
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SAIGON 03550 01 OF 02 261323Z

TRANG. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO HAVE REACHED SAFETY IS ESTIMATED

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAIGON 03550 02 OF 02 261353Z

42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 110533

O R 261033Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4167

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE

USSAG NKP THAILAND IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DA NANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 3550

EXDIS-MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

NOFORN

WARNING--SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS
INVOLVED/NO FOREIGN DISSEMINATION

AT 60,000. HOWEVER, APPROXIMATELY 100,000 ARE STRANDED ALONG
THE PHU YEN/PHU BON BORDER BY VEHICLE BREAKDOWNS OR COMMUNIST
ACTION, AND THEIR CHANCES OF REACHING SAFETY ARE BLEAK. THE
CAMP AREA NEAR THE SONG BA RIVER CROSSING WAS HEAVILY SHELLED
BY NVA MORTARS AND IS BURING. ESTIMATES OF VEHICLES DESTROYED
THERE RUN AS HIGH AS 1,500.

ELEMENTS, INCLUDING THE 3RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE DEFENDING DAU
CAU PASS, UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE 23RD DIVISION COMMAND ARE
GUARDING THE ROUTE 1 APPROACH TO NHA TRANG. TWO BATTALIONS OF THE
40TH REGT. ARE DEFENDING THE WESTERN APPROACH TO THE CITY. AN
UNCONFIRMED REPORT HAS NVA TANKS SIGHTED IN THIS AREA. TWO RF
BNS. AND FIVE RF COMPANIES ARE DEFENDING NHA TRANG ITSELF.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SAIGON 03550 02 OF 02 261353Z

TROOP MORALE IN MR 2 IS CRITICALLY LOW.

MR3

GVN FORCES DISLODGED THE NVA FROM THE POSITION ASTRIDE ROUTE 22 NEAR TRA VO MARCH 25. HEAVY SHELLING IS UNDER WAY AROUND TAY NINH, AND NVA/VC FORCES ARE CONTINUING TO PRESS THEIR ATTACKS ON ROUTE 26 TO THE NORTH OF ROUTE 22. GVN FORCES ARE HOLDING FIRM AND NVA CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN HEAVY. ACTIVITY HAS NOT RENEWED AT CHON THANH FOLLOWING HEAVY NVA LOSSES, AND MR 3 HEADQUARTERS IS PLEASED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE 5TH DIVISION IN EVACUATING TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT FROM AN LOC IN AN ORDERLY MANNER.

IN THE EAST, NVA/VC HARASSMENT ALONG ROUTE 1 IN LONG KHANH CONTINUES.

MR4

THE SITUATION IS UNCHANGED IN MR 4. MILITARY EVENTS IN THE NORTHERN PART OF VIET-NAM HAVE HAD AN EFFECT ON MORALE IN THE DELTA. MILITARY MORALE HAS SUFFERED SOMEWHAT, PARTICULARLY IN THE LOWER RANKS, BUT THE MOST APPARENT EFFECT HAS BEEN IN THE CIVILIAN SECTOR.

NVA ACTS AGAINST REFUGEES

WIDESPREAD RUMORS OF A "DEAL" BETWEEN THE COMMUNISTS AND THE GVN HAVE BEEN PROVEN FALSE BY REPEATED ACTS OF TERRORISM DIRECTED AGAINST CIVILIANS FLEEING THE COMMUNISTS. SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

1. COMMUNIST GUNNERS FIRED 14 122 MM ROCKETS AT DA NANG AIR BASE MARCH 26. MOST OF THE ROCKETS IMPACTED IN CIVILIAN AREAS NEAR THE BASE WHICH ARE PACKED WITH REFUGEES. NINE CIVILIANS, INCLUDING THREE CHILDREN, WERE KILLED, AND 34 WERE WOUNDED. TEN SOLDIERS WERE WOUNDED.

2. REFUGEES FLEEING QUANG NGAI TO CHU LAI WERE REPEATEDLY SUBJECTED TO AMBUSH ALONG THE WAY. CASUALTIES WERE HEAVY, BOTH AMONG CIVILIANS AND THE GVN FORCES ESCORTING THEM. THE ROAD IS A SCENE OF CARNAGE COMPARABLE TO THE "HIGHWAY OF HORROR" BETWEEN QUANG TRI AND HUE IN 1972.

PRESIDENT THIEU'S MESSAGE TO HIS COMMANDERS

IN A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO CORPS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SAIGON 03550 02 OF 02 261353Z

AND PROVINCE CHIEFS, PRESIDENT THIEU NOTED THAT THE SITUATION HAS REACHED A SERIOUS STAGE AND CIVILANS AND MILITARY SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL LEAVING THEIR POSTS WITHOUT AUTHORITY WERE TO BE ARRESTED, TRIED AND EXECUTED WITHOUT FAIL.

WARNING NOTICE: SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHOD INVOLVED. NO FOREIGN DISSEMINATION.

LEHMANN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMBAT OPERATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SAIGON03550
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750105-0678
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750313/aaaaalqt.tel
Line Count: 224
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <27 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGHLIGHTS OF NVA OFFENSIVE--SUMMARY FOR PERIOD ENDING NOON MARCH 26.
TAGS: MOPS, VS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006